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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79 Issue #8
April 4, 1975

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS.....

Topics to be Discussed at Future Meetings.....

- Organizational development efforts
- Executive development
- Merit promotion/appraisal system
- Budget review process for FY 1977
- Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts
- OI's electronic security proposals.

Follow-up on NFC Conference.....

Communications Being Improved Between Agencies and NFC.....NFC submitted to the agencies a preliminary draft of procedures for processing purchase orders. Following review of the draft, representatives from 5 agencies met with NFC in a 2 1/2 day technical session to resolve several problems. NFC is now proceeding to hold similar sessions with the remaining agencies. (Contact: Jan Bucknell, OMF, ext. 74678)

Accounting Task Force Submits Report to OMF.....The report is being reviewed by NFC, which will furnish its comments to OMF. A presentation will then be made to the Management Council. (Contact: Leo Palensky, OMF, ext. 77251)

Reminder.....Agencies were to review internal operations and institute corrective action to reduce FTS calls to NFC. To date, nothing has been reported to the Council concerning any actions taken. (See Mr. Bolduc's Feb. 6 memo on "New Orleans Conference.")

RESCISSION BILLS AWAIT PRESIDENTIAL ACTION.....Both Houses agreed to the conference reports on the first two agriculture-related rescission bills. If signed by the President, H.R. 3260 would rescind \$7.9 million of the Water Bank Program, and H.R. 4075 would rescind \$10 million of the Forestry Incentives Program. These rescission remain from USDA's original proposals to rescind a total of \$227.8 million. (Contact: Tom McQuillan, OMF, ext. 75901)

FCIC DISASTER PROPOSAL GOES TO HILL.....It would repeal the disaster payment provisions for feed grains, cotton and wheat and was sent to Congress on March 27. (Contact: John Mottershead, OMF, ext. 74654)

SARU MAKING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ON REPORTS TO AGENCIES.....Here is the status of major areas of work:

- External reports - completed through 12/31/74.
- Internal reports - Modifications to the systems were not handled well and caused confusion to the agencies using the reports. Reports for the period ending April 30, scheduled to be mailed on the 12th working day of May, should be at an acceptable level of accuracy.
- Voucher payments - We still have about 400 payments over 60 days old. EMSC and OMF personnel are assisting NFC in getting proper documentation to support the payments.
- WCF billings - current backlog is about 1,700. NFC is processing about 130 bills per day. By June 1, billings for the WCF will be on a current basis.

(Contact: Leo Palensky, OMF, ext. 77251)

USDA REPRESENTED ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND ALLOWANCES TASK FORCE.....Mr. Bolduc is a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Allowances to review existing policies and develop new initiatives. They will attempt to achieve reasonable uniformity and equity in allowances paid Federal civilian employees overseas. (Contact: Jan Bucknell, OMF, ext. 74678)

INTERAGENCY EFFORTS AIMED AT FSP TRAINING.....OA and FNS are jointly developing a seminar course for training personnel to review the Food Stamp Program. The training package consists of a number of modules that will be used primarily to train State auditors. It is expected to be ready in June 1975. This joint program is part of an MBO objective of OA. It continues an effort to establish a network of State and local groups to audit USDA-State cooperative programs. (Contact: Charles Landry, OA, ext. 74645)

PERSONNEL

HONOR AWARDS COMMITTEE MEETS MARCH 25.....19 nominations for Distinguished Service Awards and 121 nominations for Superior Service Awards were reviewed. Their recommendations have been forwarded to the Secretary for final determination. The committee members were Honorable D.E. Wilkinson, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture; Dr. Booker T. Whatley, Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences, Tuskegee Institute; Dr. Lois A. Simonds, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics, Ohio State University; and Mr. James C. Thomson, Editor, Prairie Farmer. (Contact: Mae Paulsen, OP, ext. 75618)

TIME AND ATTENDANCE REPORT FORMS REVISED.....This is to accommodate recording procedures required by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Split T&A's will no longer be needed where overtime is involved. Other minor changes have also been made to help the T&A recording process. Agencies will begin using the new T&A's effective Pay Period 9 (4/27-5/10/75). Instructions are specific enough so that no additional training of T&A clerks should be required. (Contact: K.W.Bradley, OP, ext. 73641)

COST ESTIMATES OF EEO COMPLAINTS CONFIRM EARLY RESOLUTION IS BEST.....Management particularly benefits from the early resolution of cases where there is reason to expect a finding of discrimination. The additional expense of processing the complaint is avoided and the period of time of the back-pay award is shortened. Agencies have several opportunities to resolve EEO complaints: (1) at the EEO Counseling stage - saving the estimated \$4,660 cost of processing a formal EEO complaint, and (2) after the investigation of a formal complaint, during an attempt at informal adjustment - saving the estimated \$1,750 cost of a hearing. (Contact: Linda Brick, OP, ext. 77525)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

USDA MINORITY BUSINESS 8(a) PURCHASES INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY.....The table below shows the increase over the last 5 years. A total USDA goal of \$3,131,000 has been established for 8(a) noncompetitive contracts in FY 1975. The Rural Minority Business Assistance Division, OE0, is monitoring and assisting agencies in this program. (Contact: J. Fred King, OE0, ext. 77117)

Total USDA 8(a) Procurement By Ethnic Groups, Fiscal Year 1970-74

	:	:	:	:	:					
Ethnic	:	:	:	:	:					
Group	:	1970	:	1971	:	1972	:	1973	:	1974
		----- 1,000 dollars -----								
Black	:	269		936		1,316		1,100		1,600
Sp.Am.	:	2		70		172		270		500
Am. Ind.	:	0		8		585		592		1,000
Other	:	0		0		49		24		100
Total	:	271		1,014		2,122		1,986		2,200

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

HATCH ACT CHANGE PERMITS CERTAIN ACTIVITIES BY STATE AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES.....

Certain previously prohibited political activities by State and local employees in Federally aided programs are now permitted, effective January 1, 1975. USDA was asked to make a one-time poster distribution explaining the changes to covered State and local employees under USDA programs. To date, USDA agencies have requested about 8,000 copies for distribution. Additional copies of the poster are available from the Procurement, Grants and Agreements Management Staff. (Contact: Don Manns or Patsy Mitchell, 00, ext. 77527)

CENTRAL SERVICES

CENTRALIZED COMPUTER MANAGEMENT TO BE DISCUSSED AT EOG MEETING.....Henry Meetze will present a paper covering background, advantages and disadvantages of "ADP resource control and management from the centralized standpoint" on May 2 to the Executive Officers Group. This group consists of the Assistant Secretaries for Administration of all cabinet level departments. HEW will present the other view, that of partially decentralized management, which is currently in effect there. (Contact: H.W. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

DRAFT TASK FORCE REPORT ON COMPUTER CENTER RATES COMPLETED.....A final report is due out later this month. The results will be briefed to the Management Council during the ADS-sponsored Council meeting in May. (See Issue 5 for background). (Contact: A.T. Devlin, ADS, ext. 73313)

OTHER

INITIAL SAVINGS BOND CAMPAIGN RESULTS NOT AS GOOD AS EXPECTED.....As of March 15, only PSA and FmHA had reached the Department's goal of 80% -- both actually exceeded that goal. The campaign closed March 31. The final report will be available about April 11. (Contact: R.R. Rhodes, ARS, ext. 68401)

NBC CREW FILMING SECRETARY IN ACTION.....in his office, at a Staff meeting last week and in his travels around the country. Some activities of FNS and AMS also have been filmed as part of ongoing NBC newscasts reporting on several programs of USDA with particular emphasis on food stamps and other similar programs. NBC has aired four film segments recently on its nightly 7 PM newscasts and more are expected. (Contact: Frank Shea, COMM, ext. 73117)

YOUR NEWSLETTER DEPENDS ON YOU.....Just a reminder that the deadline for articles for the Newsletter is always c.o.b. Tuesday of the week "we go to press." The next deadline is Tuesday, April 15. Your **article** should be sent to Jan Bucknell, OMF, room 124-E.